

Higher Education

Emergency Preparedness Plan

An emergency preparedness plan is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone on campus. Implement these proactive strategies to keep your students, faculty, and visitors safe.

Risk Assessment

Objective: Understand the most likely and significant threats to campus safety.

Steps:

- Conduct a thorough risk assessment for natural disasters, health emergencies (pandemics), and security threats (active shooter situations, assaults, etc.).
- Map out vulnerable areas on campus (e.g., dormitories, event spaces, labs).
- Collaborate with local emergency services to get insights and support.

Communication Strategy

Objective: Ensure clear, immediate, and widespread communication during emergencies.

Steps:

- Establish a multi-channel communication plan (SMS alerts, emails, digital signage, mobile apps, social media).
- Designate an emergency communication team responsible for drafting and disseminating alerts.
- Develop templates for various emergencies (e.g., severe weather, intruder on campus).
- Incorporate two-way communication where students and staff can report emergencies.

Emergency Response Team (ERT)

Objective: Have a trained team that can react quickly to different emergency scenarios.

Steps:

- Form a team with representatives from administration, security, student services, IT, and facilities.
- Assign clear roles (e.g., communication lead, first responder coordinator, liaison with local authorities).
- Conduct regular training sessions and simulations.

Evacuation and Shelter-In-Place Procedures

Objective: Clearly outline what actions to take during evacuations or shelter-in-place events.

Steps:

- Create wayfinding evacuation maps, including routes and designated safe zones.
- Identify safe rooms and shelters on campus (e.g., basements for tornadoes, locked rooms for active shooter scenarios).
- Train staff and students on shelter-in-place protocols (e.g., for tornadoes, chemical spills, or violent incidents).

First Aid and Medical Response

Objective: Ensure access to medical care during emergencies.

Steps:

- Install first-aid kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in key areas around campus.
- Train security and key staff in basic first-aid and CPR.
- Set up partnerships with local hospitals and ambulance services.

Crisis Counseling and Mental Health Support

Objective: Provide mental health support after traumatic events.

Steps:

- Establish a crisis counseling center and hotline that can be activated after major events.
- Work with the campus mental health office to create post-crisis care plans.

Regular Emergency Drills

Objective: Prepare students, faculty, and staff for potential emergencies.

Steps:

- Schedule regular drills for different scenarios (e.g., fire, tornado).
- Communicate drill schedules in advance to avoid panic but maintain realistic drill scenarios.

Preparedness is the key to safeguarding your campus community. By following this emergency preparedness checklist, your institution can ensure a safer, more resilient environment.

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